



Your Pediatric Dentist and Your Family

Q. How does a Pediatric Dentist take a different approach than a regular Dentist when working with young patients?

A. Pediatric Dentists, such as Dr. Fern, are trained in a variety of behavior techniques specifically for children. This allows them to help your child feel relaxed and confident, to cope with dental treatment successfully, and to complete the dental treatment quickly and safely. Here, we work on “child’s time,” which means that we give every child all the time he or she needs to build a long-lasting relationship based on mutual trust, respect and confidence.

Q. What’s the benefit of these techniques?

A. First, if your child has any apprehension about their visit, Dr. Fern wants to alleviate those feelings. Children naturally respond to the Dentist in much the same way they respond to a new Pediatrician, new childcare provider, or their first visit to someone’s home. Some are comfortable while others are fearful of the uncertainty. It’s important to get off to a good start so that children begin to develop positive associations with the Dentist. This is one of the reasons we recommend regular dental visits as early as 6 months of age. Making children comfortable with treatment also increases the likelihood that more involved treatments can be more easily performed in the office.

Q. What specific techniques do you use?

A. One of our primary techniques is Tell-Show-Do. We explain (i.e. tell) the treatment in words just right for your child’s age and level of understanding. We then show your child the treatment in a simplified manner so that they know what to expect. Then we proceed with (i.e. do) the treatment. Another technique we use is Positive Reinforcement, where we praise and reward children for behaviors that help with treatment. When necessary, we also use Distraction, which involves choosing words carefully, passing dental instruments out of sight, and placing a child’s attention on conversation, music, movies or even video games.

Q. Do you recommend that parents stay in the treatment room with their child?

A. We leave this decision up to you as the parent. You know your child best. If you do go in with your child, here are a few tips:

- Stand out of sight to make your child comfortable just knowing you are there. By not letting facial expressions be seen the likelihood that a worried look will upset your child is decreased (even the youngest children are very attuned to their parent’s facial clues).
- Be a silent observer. This allows Dr. Fern to build rapport and provide positive coaching for your child.
- If your child needs physical reassurance, you can sit on the dental chair and hold their hand or have your toddler sit on your lap.

If you decide not to go in with your child, be assured that Dr. Fern will talk with you after the treatment. It’s always our goal to keep you fully informed about your child’s dental health and development. We do ask that you remain in the reception area at all times.

Q. What do you recommend parents say to children who are afraid of the upcoming appointment?

A. It’s best to keep your tone light and positive. The most important thing is not to instill in your child an image of the Dentist as someone who could potentially hurt him or her. In other words, don’t say, “Mommy (Daddy, Grandma...) is here and she won’t let anyone here hurt you,” Or, “Mommy won’t let the bad Dentist hurt you.” Our joint goal is to set up positive expectations on the part of your child.

Fern E. Cytryn, D.D.S. provides pediatric dentistry with a smile. “dr. red.” as she is often called in honor of her hair, provides comprehensive pediatric dental services for children from infancy through young adulthood. For more information about Dr. Cytryn’s practice, please call 845-634-3200 or visit www.drfernsmile.com.